

Directive uses of conditional and complement insubordination in Germanic languages

Workshop 'Imperatives and other directive strategies'
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Introduction

Directivity: expressed by imperatives, hortatives, modal verbs, infinitives, participles, ..., **free subordinate clauses**

(1) *If you could open the window?* (ENGLISH, IC)

(2) *Dass du dich ja warm hältst!* (GERMAN, IC)
COMP you you.ACC PRT warm keep.PRS
'Make sure you keep warm!'

This presentation

- directive uses of free subordinate conditional and complement constructions ('insubordination', cf. Evans 2007)
- six related languages: Dutch, German, English, Swedish, Danish, Icelandic

Introduction (2)

Research questions

- descriptive: range of directive uses of conditional and complement insubordination
 - labels: mainly based on previous literature on similar constructions
 - directive complement constructions: Verstraete, D'Hertefelt and Van linden 2012 (Dutch), Verstraete and D'Hertefelt ms (Germanic)
 - directive conditional constructions: Stirling 1998 (English), Laury, Lindholm and Lindström 2013 (Swedish and Finnish), Vallauri 2004 (Italian)
- comparative-theoretical:
 - conditional vs. complement insubordination: influence of 'basic' subordination types?
 - languages of the sample: functional range

Introduction (3)

Methodology

Empirical analysis, data gathered from:

- spoken language corpora (see references)
- personal corpus of internet material (IC)
- additional work with native speakers (for Swedish, Danish, Icelandic)

Directive uses of conditional insubordination

(3) A: *Hvis du kort kan give læserne en intro til dig selv?*
COND you briefly can.PRS give.INF readers.DEF a intro to
yourself

B: *Okay, jeg hedder Jan Rolfsted, er 47 år [...]* (DANISH, IC)

'A: **If you could briefly introduce yourself to our readers?**

B: Okay, my name is Jan Rolfsted, I'm 47 years old...'

→ **Request:** speaker asks hearer to do X

Directive uses of conditional insubordination (2)

(4) *Als je dat nu eens aan diene drukker zelf vraagt?*

COND you DEM PRT PRT to DEM printer self ask.PRS

Wedden dat die dat op 5 min heeft gefikst? (DUTCH, IC)

'And what if you ask the printer yourself? I bet he'll have fixed it in 5 minutes.'

→ **Suggestion:** speaker suggests possible action X for hearer

Directive uses of conditional insubordination (3)

(5) *Ef þú svo mikið sem horfir á hana aftur...!*
COND you so much as look.PRS.IND to her again
(ICELANDIC, C)

‘If you so much as look at her again...!’

- **Threat**: speaker refers to action X, but wants hearer *not* to carry out this action
- Implied ‘**polarity reversal**’: main clause expressing negative consequent ellipsed

Directive uses of conditional insubordination (4)

	Dutch	German	Swedish	Danish	English	Icelandic
Request	+	+	+	+	+	-
Suggestion	+	+	+	+	+	?
Threat	+	+	+	+	+	+

Directive uses of complement insubordination

(6) *Dass du dich ja warm hältst!* (GERMAN, IC)
COMP you you.ACC PRT warm keep.PRS
'Make sure you keep warm!'

→ **Order** (comparable – construction: **Prohibition**): speaker tells hearer / third person (not) to do X

(7) *Dat hij misschien eens in zijn achterzak kijkt.* (DUTCH, IC)
COMP he perhaps PRT in his back.pocket look.PRS
'He could try and check his back pocket.'

→ **Advice**: speaker advises third person to do X

Directive uses of complement insubordination (2)

- (8) *Dat ze ze gerust meebrengt zondag.* (DUTCH, IC)
COMP she them PRT bring.along.PRS Sunday
'She can bring them on Sunday.'

→ **Permission:** speaker gives third person permission to carry out X

- (9) *Dat hij maar eens probeert je te wippen,*
COMP he PRT PRT try.PRS you to fire.INF
ik sla op zijn gezicht. (DUTCH, IC)
'He'd better not try and fire you, I'll punch him in the face.'

→ **Challenge:** speaker urges third person to carry out action X, but *not X* is desired
→ 'polarity reversal' (often followed by negative consequent)

Directive uses of complement insubordination (3)

	Dutch	German	Swedish	Danish	English	Icelandic
Order / prohibition	+	+	-	-	-	-
Advice	+	-	-	-	-	-
Permission	+	-	-	-	-	-
Challenge	+	-	-	-	-	-

Directive uses of conditional vs. complement insubordination

- **Directive conditional constructions**
 - Request
 - Suggestion
 - Threat
- **Directive complement constructions**
 - Order
 - Advice
 - Challenge
 - Permission

→ some similar meanings

→ BUT also differences: influence of 'basic' subordination types?

Directive uses of conditional vs. complement insubordination (2)

Directive conditional constructions:

- Request: *If you could introduce yourself to our readers?*
- Suggestion: *And what if you ask the printer yourself?*
- Threat: *If you so much as look at her again...!*

→ **common for all subtypes**: ‘hypotheticality’: *if X* involves both *X* and *not X*

Directive uses of conditional vs. complement insubordination (3)

Request and suggestion:

- X = what speaker wants, *not* X = what hearer might want
- 'way out' for hearer \rightarrow less face-threatening \rightarrow politeness (Aikhenvald 2010: 200, 275, 290, see also Brown and Levinson 1987)

Threat:

- X = what hearer wants, *not* X = what speaker wants
- negative consequence for $X \rightarrow$ strong sense of directivity

cf. basic property of conditionality: *if* p implies both p and $\sim p$ (Comrie 1986: 86)

Directive uses of conditional vs. complement insubordination (4)

Directive complement constructions

- Order: *That you keep yourself warm!*
- Advice: *That he maybe checks his back pocket?*
- Challenge: *That he only tries to fire you!*
- Permission: *That she brings them on Sunday.*

→ **common for all subtypes:** link back to something that was said before, cannot initiate interaction

Order

- reaction to something that precedes
- no initiation of interaction

Directive uses of conditional vs. complement insubordination (5)

(10) A: *Wou hij geen kussengevecht houden?*

B: ***Dat hij nog maar wat wacht!***

(DUTCH, observed)

COMP he PRT PRT a.little wait.PRS

'A: Didn't he want to have a pillow-fight?

B: He should just wait a little more!'

(11) [context: initiating interaction]

* *Dat je maar niet vergeet naar opa te bellen!*

'You shouldn't forget to call grandpa!'

Vergeet niet naar opa te bellen!

'Don't forget to call grandpa!'

Directive uses of conditional vs. complement insubordination (6)

Similar 'linking' function for other directive complement constructions:

- Advice: reaction to preceding 'problem'
- Challenge: reaction to preceding discourse
- Permission: reaction to preceding request for permission

cf. basic property of complementation: complementizer as 'linker' to preceding predicate?

Crosslinguistic differences

		Dutch	German	Swedish	Danish	English	Icelandic
Conditional constructions	Request	+	+	+	+	+	-
	Suggestion	+	+	+	+	+	?
	Threat	+	+	+	+	+	+
Complement constructions	Order / prohibition	+	+	-	-	-	-
	Advice	+	-	-	-	-	-
	Permission	+	-	-	-	-	-
	Challenge	+	-	-	-	-	-

Crosslinguistic differences (2)

Question: Why are insubordinated directive conditional strategies attested in all sample languages, and complement strategies not?

- No differentiation: word order and integration (relevant to both types of subordination)
- Typologically, both strategies occur (e.g. Ammann & van der Auwera 2004, Mauri & Sansò 2011, Sansiñena, Cornillie and De Smet 2013 on directive insubordinate complement constructions; Aikhenvald 2010: 277f, Clancy et al. 1997 on directive insubordinate conditional constructions)

Crosslinguistic differences (3)

- Mauri & Sansò (2011: 3158): crosslinguistic differences in availability of different strategies due to differences in availability of possible source constructions
- Frequently attested diachronic pathway (Mauri & Sansò 2011: 3504-3505, 3517; Birjulin & Xrakovskij 2001: 40): optative → 3rd person imperative → 2nd person imperative

(12) *Dat hij nog maar lang mag leven!* (DUTCH, IC)
COMP he PRT PRT long may.PRS live.INF
'May he live long!'

Crosslinguistic differences (4)

- Complement optatives: attested in German and Dutch, obsolete in Swedish and Danish (Lehti-Eklund 2001: 86, Hansen & Heltoft 2011: 769), archaic in English (e.g. Verstraete and D'Hertefelt ms), not attested in Icelandic
- + Dutch and German: complement directives most frequent with third person (Heinold 2012: 34, Verstraete, D'Hertefelt and Van linden 2012: 132)
- **Hypothesis:** complement directives developed (quite recently) out of complement optatives, only possible in German and Dutch

Conclusions

Conditional vs. complement directives:

- to some extent express comparable directive submeanings
- BUT still influence of 'original' subordination types
 - 'semantics': hypotheticality (conditionality) / ? (complementation)
 - typical position of subordinate clause vis-à-vis main clause: **preposition** (conditionality, cf. Diessel 2001, Vallauri 2004) / **postposition** (complementation)

Cross-linguistic differences:

- related to differences in available source constructions? (3rd person optative complement constructions as 'bridging contexts' in German and Dutch)

Questions for further research

Conditional vs. complement:

- 'Semantic' contribution of 'original' complementation?
- To what extent is analysis valid for
 - non-directive complement and conditional insubordination
 - other languages?

Crosslinguistic differences:

- Directive conditionals as result of similar diachronic developments in all sample languages?
 - Complement advice, challenge, permission: also related to optative construction / order / ...?
- further diachronic corpus research needed

Thank you for your attention!

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Abbreviations

- ACC accusative
- COMP complementizer
- COND conditional
- DEF definitive
- DEM demonstrative
- IND indicative
- INF infinitive
- PRT particle
- PRS present

References

Corpora

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